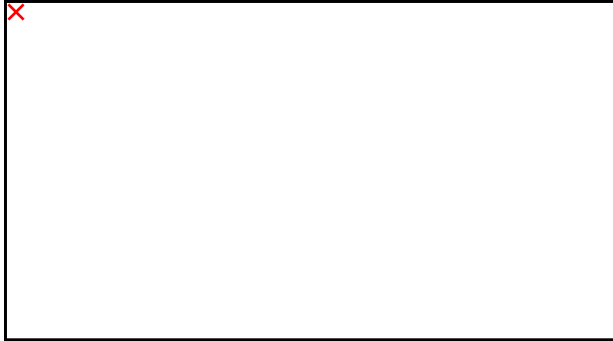


# Ways to Stay Connected with Seniors

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After many months of some of us being locked in our homes and working remotely, it's no surprise that many people are going a tad stir-crazy. But it's far worse for some seniors: Not only have visits from their kids and grandkids been suspended, but there's the extra stress that comes with the nagging suspicion that they'll be advised to remain on lockdown long after younger people begin trickling back to work and the world starts opening up again.

Fortuitously, some of the niftiest technology offers solutions both to keep us connected and protect against some of the miscreants taking advantage of the situation.

- **Health Checks.** If you are worried that all of the anxiety is harming your loved ones' overall well-being, the machine-learning algorithms that analyze activity data as part of [Alarm.com](#)'s [Wellness](#) solution can provide you with the very details you've suddenly found yourself obsessing about.

Did they open their medicine cabinet when they should, to take their prescription? Have their sleeping, eating, and (yes) bathroom patterns changed? Are they up and about during the day?

All that and more is done by connecting their home to yours via smart-home technology, with real-time smartphone alerts to let you know if something's amiss.

"You don't even know it's there, but it's here to protect you and let someone know if something does go wrong," says Margarete Pullen of Dallas, Texas, whose son had the system installed by an authorized service provider for her and her husband along with a [Wellcam](#) video camera with two-way voice capability.

- **Movie meet-ups.** Most of us are just trying to find novel ways to cope with a situation that Nicholas Christakis, a social scientist and physician at Yale University, told Science magazine "calls on us to suppress our profoundly human and evolutionary hard-wired impulses for connection."

Google's new Netflix Party extension lets friends and family watch – and video-chat their way through – a movie together on their computers. You'll need a NetFlix

subscription, but then you're free to debate if the Tiger King is worth all the hype and whether Carol Baskin really did kill her husband. Plus, unlike in real theaters, not many people (if any) are physically there to complain if you're making too much noise eating popcorn.

• **Apps! Apps! Apps!** No NetFlix subscription? With apps such as FaceTime, Skype, Houseparty and Zoom comes more proof that social distancing needn't mean social disconnecting. Mass virtual dinner parties. Mass virtual "happy hours." Mass virtual gym classes. They've all become quite the rage, with one Vermont couple in their eighties even touchingly using Apple's FaceTime to see and talk to each other after the husband had to be put in a nursing home that bars visitors during the pandemic.

Want to be a hero in your neighborhood? Use an app such as Instagram to share a video of someone [Alarm.com](#)'s [doorbell cameras](#) caught swiping one of the many, many packages you've been having delivered.

***Editor's Personal Note** - Not every senior is locked away wondering when their next person to person contact will be. Some of us seniors have been hard at work throughout the pandemic. We've figured out how to do things safely; whether it's visiting the grocery store, attending in-person doctor appointments, getting our hair done, and even going out to dinner (outdoors). The Computing Center, as an essential business, has been open, with all of us well aware that clients in every age group need us to be there for them as necessary. So far, it's all been working well.*

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